

A1 invention also provides a cached ahead concept whereby users are allowed to experience a smooth and no wait travel in the virtual world when travelling between web sites.

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Paragraph beginning at line 17 of page 1 has been amended as follows:

A2 An associated characteristic of the Web which is markedly different from real life is the elimination of the sense of a “metric.” There is no such as being “proximity” on the Web, and while in many situations this is a positive factor, it removes the sense of anticipation or foreseeability that is fundamental to human experience. Since all human senses are geared toward discriminating distance to prioritize reaction, Web experiences, in contrast, may tend to amplify the sense of unreality.

Paragraph beginning at line 18 of page 4 has been amended as follows:

A3 The visitor icons would preferably have unique configurations which could be chosen by the visitor from a selection or created based on the profile information. The user could “walk” the icon about the site. This would cause the icon to move slowly in an intended direction. During this “walk” information could be provided to the visitor about the correlation of her profile with the profiles of other visitors currently on the site. Alternatively, the icon could display the profile information or some information about that visitor derived from the profile information. The walk would be interrupted while visitors chat with one another.

Paragraph beginning at line 4 of page 6 has been amended as follows:

A4 A Common Metric is when the geographic terrain on which the various visitors are located is common to all, so that one person can approach the other person by reducing the distance between the two, by pointing in the direction of the target person and applying velocity, for example. To accommodate many visitors (avoid overcrowding), and in order to take advantage of the preferences and habits of a person (a music lover may want to be close to the music store), Customized Metrics may be used to rearrange the reference points particular to a given person. For example, if person A prefers to be closest to the Music Store, then to the Sporting Goods Store, then to the Arcade, the Customized Metric may be used to create a set of relative distances between the three stores as well as the entry to the Virtual World, to achieve a desired effect. In this case, a set of Customized Metrics may be attached to a person, indicating how their “view” of the Virtual World should be constructed. This can be represented by a set of vectors which describes the location of each “Store” or other landscape feature particular to the person.

Paragraph beginning at line 1 of page 15 has been amended as follows:

A5 Self versus Avatar. A character according to the invention may also be a Self or an Avatar. One possible element is used to distinguish a Self character and an Avatar visually (such as a halo on the character icon); another element is to allow each visitor to have one Self and a finite number Avatar. Other modalities could be used to confine the Self and Avatars to different worlds, or to facilitate different rules of interaction among Self-Self, Self-Avatar, and Avatar-Avatar encounters. For example, Avatar-Avatar can tolerate physical combat, while Self-Avatar cannot. Another example is for Avatar to be able to see a Self, but cannot talk to a Self etc. Another element is for the development of a Self character follows one set of rules while the development of an Avatar follows another set of rules.
